15

E. 10. 37

A

SERMON

Preached in the

Cathedral Church of *Durham*,
on the Second of *December*,

BEING THE

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

Day of Thanksgiving

FOR THE

PEACE.

By *THOMAS COMBER*, D. D.
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A Thanksgiving Sermon.

Psalm CXLIV. 15.

Happy are the People who are in such a case: Yea, blessed are the People who have the LORD for their God.

WHen the ancient Dictators, or succeeding Emperors of *Rome*, triumphed for the happy ending of an Honourable War, their Custom was, to go up to the *Capitol*, and there offer to *Jupiter* the Lawrels they were crowned with; so did the *Curij* and *Fabricij* of old (*a*); so did *Nerva* consecrate his, got in *Pannonia*, that very day on which he received them (*b*). Yea, *Suetonius* remarks, *That* Domitian *himself had so much Piety, to depoſite his Triumphant Wreath, sent from* Sarmatia, *in that same Sacred Place*; (*c*) To shew, That even Pagans believed *Victory* and *Peace* the Gifts of Heaven, and that the Praises returned for them were due to the Gods which they adored.

(a) *Pacati* Paneg. in *Theodos.*
(b) *Plin.* Paneg. in *Trajan.*
(c) *Sueton.* vit. *Dom.* c. 6. p. 721

And if this were the Opinion and Practice of the *Gentile* World, it can be no wonder that our valiant and religious Prince, upon the like ſucceſs, ſhould oblige us this Day to joyn with him in giving ſolemn Thanks to the only true God: By his Direction, we often addreſſed to him with *Faſting* and *Prayers*, which having effectually prevailed; ſo that a wide ſpreading and long-raging War, is happily finiſhed by an univerſal and amicable Peace. Now 'tis juſt our *Praiſes* ſhould be preſented to the ſame God, who hath graciouſly anſwered our Requeſts.

In which Duty I can give no better Directions than may ariſe from our conſidering *David*'s joyful Anthem, endited by the Spirit of God, and ſet by that devout King for the Sacred Choir; (not upon his conquering *Goliah*, as the LXX Entitle it, but) on the occaſion of his Peaceful Settlement upon that Throne, to which tho' God deſigned and brought him, yet he had now poſſeſſed it for Seven years unquietly (*d*), being engaged in a War with *Saul*'s Party: But at laſt having either by Arms or Treaty brought all his Foes to ſubmit to and own his Authority, he Compoſed this *Pſalm*, not to extol his Perſonal Courage; but to *bleſs the Lord his ſtrength, who taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight*, *ver.* 1. for he freely confeſſes his Unworthineſs, *ver.* 3, 4. and aſcribes all the Succeſs to the Mighty things God had done for him, *ver.* 5, 6. Yet having ſtill

(d) 2 *Sam.* V. 5.

ſome

ſome latent Enemies, he prays to be delivered from their evil Words and Deeds, *ver.* 7, 8. But withal remembring, how conſtantly and graciouſly the LORD had prevented all their Deſigns, *ver.* 9, 10. He renews his Petition for the Divine Protection, to ſecure him againſt ſuch Foes, as neither his *Clemency* nor *Succeſs* could engage, *ver.* 11. Which ſuppoſing to be granted, He makes a lively deſcription of the many Advantages, His ſafety and the continuance of the preſent Peace, would procure for all his People, *viz. The increaſe of Families, filling of their Garners, multiplying of their Stock*, and *perfect freedom from Enemies abroad and Complaints at home*, ver. 12, 13, 14. And upon the whole he pronounces in my Text, that ſuch as enjoy all theſe Temporal effects of *Peace* are really happy; for (ſaith he) *Happy are the People who are in ſuch a caſe.* But then raiſing his Thoughts to conſider, that His eſtabliſhment to be their King, would alſo fix the Profeſſion of the True Religion, and conſequently engage God to be on their ſide, He prefers that Bleſſing above all the former, and ſays, *Yea, bleſſed are the People who have the LORD for their God.*

Which Words lead me to conſider; *Firſt*, The meaner kind of thoſe Effects, which our preſent full blown Hopes expect from this happy Turn of our Affairs, *viz.* That *Peace* will procure all ſorts of Temporal *Plenty* and Proſperity. *Secondly*, The ſurer and ſublimer

ſublimer Spiritual effects which ſuch a Juncture is likely to produce, *viz.* An aſſurance of God's Favour, and of our undiſturbed continuing to profeſs his own and only True Religion; *Happy are the People, &c.*

Firſt, The Temporal good things which follow *Peace* and make any People *extreamly happy*, are only deſcribed in my Text by theſe general Words, *In ſuch a caſe:* But they refer to the three preceding Verſes, where they are all ſo Logically comprehended and ſet out ſo Rhetorically, that a fair and juſt Commentary is all that needs to confirm or illuſtrate the Propoſition. The Sum is, That our happy Circumſtances by this *Peace* will add to the Number of our People, improve the Fortunes of all ſorts of Men, and free us from the foreign and domeſtick Miſchiefs which we ſuffered in time of War. But to be more particular;

Ver. 12. *That our Sons may be as Plants grown up in their Youth; that our Daughters may be as Corner Stones, poliſh'd after the ſimilitude of a Palace.* The young Men are called *the Power*, and the Virgins *the Beauty of our Land* (e). Now in War *our Sons are ſlain with the Sword, and cut down like untimely Plants*; and conſequently *our Daughters are not given in Marriage*. The Women, who are ſaid, *to build their Husbands Houſes*, when joyned in *holy Matrimony* (f), and might increaſe Families, are careleſly thrown by in Times of War, to the great decreaſe of the ſucceeding Generation. But in *Peace*,

(e) *Pſalm* LXXVIII. ver. 62, & 64.

(f) *Ruth* IV. 2.

Peace, theſe *Sons* of ours ſhall grow up ſpeedily and without diſturbance, like *young Plants* in a fruitful and well fenced Garden. And the Virgins being properly placed in ſeveral Families, ſhall look like the poliſhed Corners of the Temple, *i. e.* be the Ornament and Support of many flouriſhing Houſes. Or without a Figure, Mankind ſhall encreaſe, and the *King ſhall have honour by the multitude of his people* (g) which will make him formidable abroad; and private perſons ſhall have abundant joy, in the ſpreading of their numerous Iſſue, of which none ſhall be caſt by as uſeleſs, none to be cut off but at Natures period, and in her order too, the Children dropping pious Tears on their Parents Hearſe, not (as in war) Parents ſurviving the doleful news of their Childrens untimely end.

(g) *Prov.* XIV. 28.

Ver. 13. *That our Garners may be full, affording all manner of ſtore, that our Sheep may bring forth thouſands and ten thouſands in our ſtreets. That our Oxen may be ſtrong to labour*, &c.] This is our Royal Inſpired Poets elegant deſcription of Plenty of all kinds (or as the Hebrew here has it *from kind to kind*) the ſenſe of which is; That whereas in War the laborious Husbandman is diſcouraged from plowing and ſowing Corn, as well as from breeding and feeding Sheep and Oxen, leſt the plundring Souldiers ſhould make Forage of his Crop, and drive away his Cattle; the induſtrious Merchant dares not buy into

—miles Barbarus has ſegetes—?

into his Store-houſes, nor export what he has bought, leſt his Principal Stock and Gains, both fall into Pirates hands; and thus the Granaries in the Country, as well as the Warehouſes in the City are empty, and the Paſtures and Arable lie waſte. Now the Countrymen may ſow quietly, and reap abundance; their Flocks and Herds will exceedingly encreaſe: The Citizens may traffick freely, and make frequent and large Returns; ſo that their Warehouſes as well as their Purſes will be well filled; in a word, this Peace will every way enrich both City and Country too in a little time.

Ver. XIV. 2d. Parti

Then it follows — *That there be no decay*, &c. This is the third and preſent benefit of Peace, that it puts a Period to all the Calamities of War. The Hebrew imports, *There will be no breaking in, nor carrying out, nor cry in our ſtreets*; which with our old Tranſlation may be thus Paraphraſed, *viz.* That in War we are daily alarm'd with invaſion of our Country, and taking of Cities; we hear of multitudes that are either ſlain or made Captives, whoſe poor Widows and fatherleſs Children, perhaps their aged and now ſuccourleſs Parents fill our ſtreets with wailing and miſerable complaints. This univerſal Peace (as it was deſcribed of old in the Roman Medals) comes with a Torch and ſets fire to all the murdering Inſtruments of War, ſo that there is no decay or deſtruction of men, by invaſions or ſieges, by battles at Land

Land or fights at Sea: No Priſoners forced into ſtrange Lands, barbarouſly uſed there, and dearly bought from thence, to their own or their friends ruine. No, this is (bleſſed be God) all paſſed over, we ſhall hear no more of theſe Complaints, and Oh what a mighty bleſſing is this! That there will be no more effuſion of Chriſtian Blood, no more robbing men of their lives, liberties and eſtates, but all men are quiet, ſafe and free, not one now will have any more reaſon to complain. To ſum up all in the firſt part of my Text.

Happy are the people, &c. That is, it muſt be confeſſed, the People who are delivered from all theſe miſchiefs of a tedious and deſtructive War, and reſtored to all the fore-mentioned bleſſings, by a welcome and healing Peace, are as happy as this world can make them; and this (bleſſed be God for proſpering the Arms and Counſels of his Inſtrument, our Beloved and ever to be Honoured Soveraign) is now our caſe. We do, and we may entertain our ſelves this Day with this pleaſing, this delightful proſpect. There is a period put already to the dreadful evils of War, and we ſhall in a ſhort time poſſeſs all the deſirable effects of Peace, that is, encreaſe of People, incouragement of Induſtry, reviving of Trade by Sea and Land, plenty of the fruits of the Earth, multiplying our Stocks on the ground, improving of all ſorts of Arts and Sciences, and in a Ver. XV. 1ſt. Part.

word, Universal Prosperity, and a growing Wealth will be our Countries happy Lot. The ingenious *Romans* (in the Medals before cited) put a *Cornucopia*, stuffed with all variety of Grain, Fruits and Flowers, into the left hand of the Figure which represented Peace, to shew she was the Mother of Plenty, and cause of abundant encrease. The *Jews* when they would, in one word, wish all prosperity to their Friend, said *Peace be to you*, a Salutation as kind as it was comprehensive, including tranquility of Mind, health of Body, long Life, Wealth and Honour, and every good thing. And the Sacrifice of Gratitude they made to God for all, or any of these Earthly Blessings was called a *Peace Offering*; which word also signified *Festival Cheer* (*b*), because it was so large as to afford God and the Priest their shares, and the remainder furnished out a sumptuous Feast, which was followed with solemn and extraordinary Rejoycings. Now if they gave such acknowledgments for every single Mercy to each private person, What may God expect from us this day, for granting us all the blessings of this World at once, and giving them not to one or two Men or Families, but to three whole Nations together. So that every Man, according to the proportion of his interest, will have his full share of this Universal Happiness. And if every Man's Joy and Praise equal his Duty and his Obligations; so many united Hearts

(*b*) *Prov.* VII. 14.

Hearts and Voices muſt needs fill every corner of theſe Lands with loud and laſting Hallelujah's. But there are ſome peculiar conſiderations in our caſe, which as they very much advance our felicity, ſo they ought to tune our joy and gratulations to the higheſt Key; for as a violent and long continuing Storm renders the ſweet and gentle Calm that follows it more acceptable, as dark and tedious Night makes the Morning Light more welcome; and finally, as a ſevere and languiſhing Sickneſs cauſes us to value the Health which ſucceeds it more highly, (*i*) So our having ſtrugled ſo many years with the miſeries and difficulties of a laſting War, and as long wanting the wiſhed for fruits of Peace, ſhould methinks almoſt raviſh us with delight at the return of theſe ſo often and ſo earneſtly deſired felicities. Eſpecially ſince they were alſo ſo ſuddenly and unexpectedly reſtored to us, that ſo wondrous a change was very lately rather the object of our Deſires than of our Hopes. 'Tis no wonder the Enemies of this Government who rejoyed at its misfortunes, and expected to ſee its fall, ſhould ſay of this Peace, as that unbelieving Lord did of Plenty in *Iſrael*; *If the Lord ſhould make Windows in Heaven, might this thing be?* (*k*) And ſome may be apt to think they deſerve with him only to hear of it with their Ear, but never to taſt its delicious Fruits; but I have ſo much charity to wiſh their diſappointments

(*i*) *Quid boni habet ſanitas languor oſtendit.* Hier. Ep. 26.

(*k*) 2 Kings VII. 2.

may convert them, ſo that we may henceforth all rejoyce together; for we muſt confeſs ſome who loved the Government, had fears ſometimes which almoſt equalled their confidence; but kind Heaven having now exceeded the expectations of all parties, ſuch unlook'd for favours ſhould make all that love their Native Country rejoyce exceedingly at ſo advantagious, ſo ſudden and ſurprizing a change. All who are to have any part in this univerſal Bleſſing, ought to be very thankful to God, and very grateful to the King, who under him made this Peace, and muſt be the Garrantee to maintain and continue it. 'Tis very obſervable, that the two Verſes immediately before thoſe rare deſcriptions of all theſe happy effects, are one of them a Thankſgiving for (*l*) Ver. 10. delivering *David* from the peril of the Sword (*l*); the other a Prayer, that God would ſtill preſerve him from ſuch Foes, as now flattered him with falſe (*m*) Ver. 11. words, but they ſtill had hands of iniquity (*m*), and (*n*) Ver. 12. then immediately follows, *That our Sons*, &c. (*n*) which plainly intimates, that if we be now thus happy, we owe what we have at preſent, to Heavens protecting our King from the perils of War, and his Safety and long Life muſt ſtill be the ſubject of our Prayers, otherwiſe our Peace will ſcarce endure long enough to fill our Country with People, our Granaries with Corn, our Paſtures with Sheep and Oxen, or our Purſes with Riches. A good Prince is as the

the Greek Name imports, *The foundation of all the publick Bleſſings his people enjoy* (o). Our happineſs and his Preſervation are ſo viſibly linck'd together, that we are bound as well by love to our ſelves, as by gratitude to Him, to praiſe the Lord unanimouſly, that He eſcaped the dangers of War, and to pray moſt ardently that He may live to enjoy the bleſſings of that Peace which His Courage and Conduct hath procured, and doth defend: If we are, or hope to be happy *Je Maintaindray* is his Reſolution and Motto both. What peaceful Crowns of Verdant Olives, what Triumphal Arches does he deſerve? what faithful Allegiance, what Affection and Duty doth he merit from us, and all that live under His happy and gentle Rule, for putting us all into ſo bleſſed a Condition. Our other Tributes we may hope will ſhortly ceaſe, but the Tribute of Love, Duty and Allegiance, muſt be always paid, and will be ever due to him.

(o) Βασιλεὺς i.e. Βάσις τῦ λαῦ Etym.

And now I have done with the temporal cauſes of our Joy, which *David* owns to be ſo many, and ſo great, that *the people are really happy who are in ſuch a caſe*, and ſo ſome expound the word *Yea*, to be a confirmation of that firſt aſſertion, that is, *'tis true*; I confeſs theſe circumſtances make a Nation happy. But conſidering the admirable piety of the Royal Penman, I chooſe to interpret this *Yea*, as ſignifying *Yea rather* bleſſed, *&c.* for ſo this affir- Part II.

affirmative is often rendred, as where Christ says (to give but one instance) Yea, *blessed are they that hear*, &c. we read it, *Yea rather blessed*, &c. (*p*) So here, it is used by way of comparison and preference, to intimate that tho' it be true, Peace and Plenty do make a People happy in a lower and less degree; yet in *David's* Opinion, that People is rather to be counted blessed who have the higher, more solid and spiritual Felicity, *to have the Lord for their God.* Which sense the Syriac Version happily expresses by putting a sort of negative interrogatory on the First Proposition, and strongly affirming the Second, *Nunquid beatus populus cui talia contingunt? Imo beatus, &c.* (g) *Are the people*, &c. that is, are there no other blessings which denominate us happy but such as are temporal? Yes, there are others that are far more transcendent, which are comprized under this Phrase, *the having the Lord*, &c.

(*p*) Luke XI. 28.

(*q*) Vers. Syriac. Polygl. Bib.

Now this implies two things, First our owning the true God, and him only by a right worship to be our Lord, and so it signifies our Profession and Practise of the one and only right Religion. 2*dly*. His owning us for his peculiar people by his signal Providence, constant Protection, and all the instances of a singular distinguishing Love, that is, *we know we have the Lord for our God*, when we serve him only, and in an acceptable manner; and again it appears to others, *that we have the Lord for our God*,

God, &c. when he continually and remarkably bleſſes us as thoſe who have a near relation to him. And I am next to demonſtrate our greateſt happineſs lies in theſe two Points. Theſe were the chiefeſt felicities of *Iſrael* and *Judah* under the reign of *David* then, and are now our principal happineſs under our *David*, they had, and we have a religious King, a General Peace, and wondrous hopes of Plenty: but as theirs, ſo our main title to be called bleſſed is,

Firſt, Our freedom to own the Lord our God by profeſſing and practiſing his True Religion, this the Royal Pſalmiſt declares in his caſe, *He ſhewed his word unto Jacob, his ſtatutes and his judgments unto Iſrael: He hath not dealt ſo with any nation*, &c. (r) And praiſed be Heaven 'tis our caſe alſo, and to convince you of this being our chiefeſt felicity, conſider, if we were only Fleſh and not Spirit, earthly bleſſings alone would come up to all the capacities of our nature; but we have immortal Souls, which can no way be happy but by knowing, loving and ſerving the Lord as our only God; now True Religion alone makes us do this aright, and therefore that only contributes to the felicity of our better part which never dies. Poor Heathens who know not the true God, and worſhip a falſe one, and thoſe erroneous Chriſtians whoſe Worſhip is a daily Provocation, be they never ſo proſperous in this World, their

(r) *Pſalm* CXLVII. 19. 20.

their Souls are miſerably deluded here, and in danger to be loſt for ever. Now our Saviour asks (s) Matth. XVI. 26. *What is a man profited*, &c.(s) or as St. *Luke* expreſſes (t) *Luke* IX. 25. it —*loſe himſelf*, &c. (t) Alas, with our Souls we loſe the beſt part, the only laſting part of our ſelves, and with it all our capacities to enjoy any happineſs to all eternity. So that the True Religion which muſt ſave our Souls, is the choiceſt bleſſing that any Perſon or Nation can enjoy, to know all that is revealed of God's Nature, to be inſtructed in all parts of his Will, and to be directed in the certain way to everlaſting Bliſs; this makes a People to be *bleſſed indeed*. 'Twas the ſaying of a pious Jew, *Si dederis mihi omne* (u) *Ap. Druſium.* *Aurum & Argentum, non viverem, &c.* (u) When *Saul* firſt and then *Abſolom*, drove *David* away from God's Tabernacle, though he had Honours and Offices, eſpecially among the Philiſtines; yet he bemoans his (w) *Pſalm* CXX. 5. lot, *that he was conſtrained to dwell with Meſeck* (w); and though he dwelt as a Free-man in thoſe Tents of Ungodlineſs, yet the True Religion not being profeſſed there, he envies *the poor Korhites, the door keep-* (x) *Pſalm* LXXXIV. 10. *ers in the houſe of his God* (x), and wiſhes to change his High Station under an Idolatrous Prince, for theirs. True Religion purges our Minds from Ignorance and Error, our Lives from Immorality and Impiety, *teaching us to deny ungodlineſs — and to live* (y) *Tit.* XI. 11, 12. *ſoberly*, &c. (y) it ſettles us in all our Doubts, comforts us in all our Troubles, and carries us through all

all Temptations; it makes our Converſation to be uſeful to Men, and our Worſhip pleaſing to God in this World, and fits us to enjoy Him in the next. If we add to this, the ſolid Delight and laſting Satisfaction which holy Souls find in reading, hearing and underſtanding God's Word, in offering up daily Praiſes and Prayers to their Heavenly Father, what benefit they reap from pious and practical Sermons, what comfort and ſpiritual advantages they have by frequently, and devoutly Communicating: Theſe certainly will be accounted by us (as they are eſteemed by all good Men) the greateſt Bleſſings we can enjoy. And ſince the uſe of theſe without fear or interruption is ſecured to us by this Peace, this is one main ground of this Days Rejoycing; our Faith and Worſhip are ſafe by his Preſervation, who, under God, was alone able to defend them. Had God ſuffered Him to fall, and His Enemies to prevail, the fate of our late neighbouring Proteſtants, is demonſtration, that we muſt not have owned the Lord for our God at any lower Price, than the forfeiture of our Eſtates and Liberties by Fines, Priſons and Baniſhment, and the loſs finally of our Lives by the utmoſt Torments and moſt illegal Severities. We are delivered from Perſecution, as well as from War, by Him that is an equal Friend to our Religion and our Liberties. And whoever doth not re-

joyce at this, must either be of no Religion at all, or would have been no Protestant, if Affairs had had another issue. because every man knows the Romanists always Persecute where they have Power; and no man that believes his own Religion to be the best, can wish Power in those Hands, that would use all means to extirpate it. So that while some murmur at the Lord's goodness to this Church, sordid Worldlings only rejoyce at the Pleasures and Prosperity they expect from the lately ratified Peace, I would lead you, as reformed Christians, to the Nobler and more Spiritual Effects of it, which have a juster Title to your Joy and Gratitude; we have indeed Temporal Mercies also, and as far as they reach they make us happy; but we should consider that our Most Religious Sovereign has hereby setled us and our Posterity also (I hope) in the quiet possession of our Religion by Scripture, as well as by Law established. Their Designs, and our Fears of Persecution are vanished, the Doors of the Sanctuary open; if ill Principles or Sloth do not, nothing else can hinder our enjoyment of all God's Holy Ordinances administred in their utmost Purity and Perfection; we have, and (blessed be God) are like to have all the Means to make us Holy here, and Happy for ever hereafter. Another turn of Affairs might have set up Gods many and Lords many;

many; but now we have none but the Lord for our God. Our Doctrines are True, our Worship, Hierarchy and Ceremonies Pure and Primitive, and every part of our Religion Sincere and without Guile. We need not fear the crafty slavery of auricular Confession, the costly cheat of purchased Absolutions, the more open delusions of feigned Miracles, forged Visions, or counterfeit Relicks, nor need we dread the terrors of a barbarous Inquisition. We are intirely safe from all these Evils and in possession of these best of all good things; and this Peace hath added to our assurance of all this; therefore let us say *This is the Lord's doing*, &c. (z).

(z) *Psalm* CXVIII. 23. 24.

Secondly, But this Phrase of *having the Lord for our God*, takes in his owning us for his People by his constant Love and peculiar Favours, as well as our owning him for our God *by a true Faith, and right way of Worship*. His Covenant declares this, for it is reciprocal — *if he be to us a God, we shall be to him a people* (a); when he said, *he was Abraham's God*, he adds, *that he would be his exceeding great reward* (b); and *Moses*, saith he, was to demonstrate himself *Israel's* God *by being near unto them in all things that they called upon him for* (c); and when he enforces his Laws, by saying, *he was the Lord their God*, he means (says *Ab. Ezr.*) their *Benefactor* (d). He is infinite in Power and Goodness, and having a peculiar

(a) *Heb.* VIII. 10.
(b) *Gen.* XV. 1.
(c) *Deut.* IV. 7.
(d) *Com in Levit.* XVIII. 2.

liar Favour to ſuch as rightly believe and ſerve him; the People who do ſo, have a right to his extraordinary Kindneſs, and ſpecial Protection; the Heathen Poet knew ſo much when he ſaid,

(e) Ovid. de Pont. l. 1. El. 3. *Jure venit cultos ad ſibi quiſq; Deos* (e).

He ſends the idolatrous Iſraelites, and may ſend the Chriſtians who pray to Saints and Angels, *to go and cry to the Gods they have choſen* (f). But in all our exigencies he will ſignalize himſelf to be our God, and manifeſt us to be his People; the Peace and its Effects, are at this juncture very clear Indications of his particular regard to our Prayers and Needs; but theſe are the Streams and ſingle Branches: the ever fruitful Root, and never failing Spring, from whence we may always hope for freſh Mercies upon new Emergencies is, *that we have the Lord for our God.* And that is the principal cauſe of our Joy, which I will make out by this Method, as to the very Peace we now enjoy,

(f) Judg. X. 14.

1*ſt.* By ſhewing God was the Original Author of it. 2*dly.* He alone can make it Laſting. 3*dly.* He only can ſanctifie it, and make it a real Bleſſing to us.

1*ſt.* Our Happineſs principally, at this time, lies in having the Lord for our God, becauſe without him

him we could not have attained to the Bleſſings of Peace, 'tis he alone *makes war to ceaſe in all the World* (g); 'tis he gives ſtrength and power, *&c.* he gives his People the bleſſing of Peace (*h*); we had, 'tis true, a prudent and reſolute Prince, and (by his Conduct and Example) a valiant and daring Army, yet our Enemies were at leaſt equal to us in Policy, Strength and Number; the Ballance long hung even, our Hopes and Fears were equally poiſed, and while both Parties remained obſtinate, none could foreſee the end of this Bloody Conteſt. But all of a ſudden θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, a ſecret and amazing Providence of his, who hath the hearts of Kings in his hands, diſpoſed our late Potent Adverſary to make Overtures, and inclined our Invincible Sovereign to accept a Treaty, which is now ended by an amicable Accommodation, and a joyful Peace. Now all that ſee this, muſt ſay, *This hath God done* (*i*). He governs not only the World, but thoſe that Rule it; and if Princes conſult for War when he reſolves on Peace, he caſts out their Counſels: for he contrives the coherence of Cauſes, and not only foreſees, but aſſigns all Events. He was our own God, and was unwilling we ſhould be worſted by a War, into which our Zeal for his Religion, and the Laws that defended it had engaged us, and therefore he reſolved to give it a happy concluſion, which he has now

(g) *Pſalm* XLVI. 9.
(h) *Pſalm* XXIX. 10.
(i) *Pſalm* LXIV. 9.

now done to all our ſatisfaction. Some wi l ſet out their brave Exploits by Sea and Land, others extol their politick Advices; ſome will number our Troops and Regiments, and ſet off our Force and Advantages; but *we will remember the Name of the Lord our God* (*k*). To him will we pray if ever we be in like diſtreſs, in him alone will we rejoyce this Day, our Praiſes ſhall firſt be preſented to him. *Severus* that excellent Heathen Emperor, after a Victory, ordered the Senate to decree ſolemn Adorations to the Gods, leſt he might ſeem ungrateful to them (*l*); whoſe Example our gracious King hath followed, He himſelf gives all the glory to Heaven, and requires us to do ſo alſo. Now tho' worldly men admire Riches and Trade, abundant Plenty and undiſturbed Pleaſures (the conſequences of Peace) as their chief, yea only happineſs; yet they ſhould remember God is the fountain and giver of theſe Bleſſings alſo; if their concern for Spiritual Mercies do not, yet even their ſatisfaction in thoſe that are Temporal ſhould engage them to praiſe the God of Peace. The Romans had a Feaſt called *Fontinalia*, wherein all who drank of any Stream were obliged to go up to the Fountain Head and crown it with Garlands (*m*). Let all who are refreſhed with the happy effects of this Peace, do God the ſame juſtice, and then they alſo muſt give him all the glory, for we

(*k*) *Pſalm* XX. 7.

(*l*) *Lamprid. in vit. Sever. p.*

(*m*) *Nic. Cauſſin. hiſt. par.* VI. *l.* 5. *c.* 37.

we had never ſeen this wonderful accommodation if he had not brought it about; and therefore our felicity conſiſts not ſo much in the Effects as the Cauſe, not in Peace or Plenty, but in having him for our God, who now hath given us both, and can do as much on a freſh occaſion, if his own People need it.

2dly. Our chief happineſs muſt lie in having the Lord for our God, becauſe he only can make our Peace laſting; and if it be not durable it is not valuable. There muſt be ſome time to heal and cloſe up the Wounds this lingring yet devouring War hath made; our Granaries and Warehouſes cannot be filled, our Grounds fully ſtocked, nor the decays of Mankind repaired on a ſudden; and the ſame God who made our Peace, he alone can make it continue long enough to be a real Bleſſing. Our circumſtances now look very fair, we have got a mighty King for our new Ally, and ſtill preſerve our old Confederates; but the Pſalmiſt cautions us, *not to put our truſt in Princes* (*n*), whoſe Perſons are mortal and their Minds may change, therefore the Prophet notes, we can *truſt in none but the Lord for ever and ever* (*o*); and St. *James* gives the reaſon, *becauſe with him is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning* (*p*). Nothing could ſpring up more opportunely, or be more welcome than *Jonah*'s Gourd, and the weary

(*n*) *Pſalm* CXLVI. 2.

(*o*) *Iſai.* XXVI. 3.

(*p*) *James* I. 17.

weary Prophet expected many days refreshment under its pleasing shade; but in one Night a secret Worm nipt it and his hopes together, and left him the more uneasie because of his unlook'd for disappointment. The sum is, in *our prosperity we are apt to say, we shall never be moved; yet if God hide away his face we shall be troubled* (*q*). His favour is as necessary to keep, as it was to make us whole. Besides, if we grant, the effects of Peace are such as may make a People extreamly happy, but 'tis not Peace alone, but God's blessing produces those effects, 'tis that (as *Solomon* notes) maketh us rich (*r*). He must bless the labours of the Countryman, and the industry of the Merchant; the fruits of our Bodies, and the fruits of our Cattle and our Ground, or there will be no increase of mankind, nor plenty of any other good things: Plagues and Epidemical Diseases may cut off as many Lives in Peace, as the Sword destroyed in Battel: Drought, Deluge or Murrain by Land, may in quiet times make the Country as poor, as Plunder and Rapine; Storms and Tempests, Rocks and Shelves at Sea, may undo our Traders as well as Pirates. Now God only can permit or restrain these evils, so that we owe our Prosperity *to his being our God*, and not to any thing else; wherefore we must still labour to continue in his Love, or else our Happiness will soon be at an end,

(*q*) *Psalm* XXX. 6, 7.

(*r*) *Prov.* X. 22.

end, we muſt by firmly adhering to his True Religion and all acts of Piety and Vertue bring him into the League, otherwiſe either it will not hold long, or if it do, it can do us no good. I have read in the German Hiſtories of a pious Biſhop of *Magdeburgh* who was threatned with a War by a Potent Neighbour Prince, lately his Confederate, and anſwered the Meſſenger, *That his Maſter might do his pleaſure, he would ſay his Prayers to God, and take care of his Church:* Upon notice whereof his Adverſary gave over his Warlike Preparations, and ſaid, *He would not fight againſt one who had maide a League with Heaven.* And ſo long as the Celeſtial King is our Friend, either we ſhall have no Foes, or they cannot hurt us; ſo that even now we enjoy Peace, that which muſt make that Continue, and us Bleſſed is, *that we have the Lord for our God.*

3*dly, Laſtly,* This is further apparent from hence, *that if our Peace be durable,* it is no Bleſſing to us, unleſs God ſanctifie the Proſperity that uſually attends it. For that plenty of all kinds, which we call the felicity of peaceful times, by vicious and ungrateful Men, is apt to be abuſed to Pride and Luxury, Rioting, Wantonneſs and all ſorts of Exceſs, and theſe let in floods of Miſchiefs, Sedition and Mutinies, Suits and Quarrels, Diſeaſes and ſundry kinds of untimely Death; ſo that, *Sarisburienſis* affirms,

Pleaſures kill as many in Peace, as Battels deſtroy in War (*s*); and *Solomon* had long before obſerved, *That the turning away,* (*Quies inſipientium*, as *Junius* reads it) *ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of Fools ſhall deſtroy them* (*t*). When men are deſerted by the Grace of God in a plentiful Fortune, they bring *David*'s Prophetick Curſe upon themſelves, *Their* (*well-ſpred*) *Table becomes a Snare*, &c. (*u*) and thus by an unaccountable Folly, that which was intended to make them Happy, becomes their Miſery, and proves an occaſion to ruin their Bodies and Souls alſo. Which hath ſo anciently and commonly been obſerved to be the effect of a ſpreading Plenty and univerſal Luxury, that *Xerxes* diſarmed the conquered *Babylonians*, and enjoyn'd them to give themſelves wholly *to Feaſting, Drinking, Dancing and wanton Dalliance.* Which was the ſame way that the cruel *Phalaris* took to puniſh the Citizens of *Leontium*; and the only penalty *Cyrus* impoſed upon the diſſolute *Lydians*, when he had been highly provoked by them (*w*). Yet this is the Happineſs that vain and carnal Men ſo vehemently wiſh for, and hug themſelves mightily upon its near approaches; but unleſs the Grace of God firſt reform them, this Bleſſing will be a Curſe, their Corrupt Stomachs will turn this wholſom Nouriſhment to Poyſon, and ſo we may read the Text with the Syriac verſion, *VVhat!*

(*s*) *Sarisb. Policrat. l*3. §. 16.

(*t*) *Prov.* 1. 32.

(*u*) *Pſalm* LXIX. 23.

(*w*) *Æl. ab Alex. gen. dil.* 2. *c.* 13. *p.* 74.

are

are people happy who are in ſuch a Caſe? No, not *unleſs they have*, &c. If our Peace and Plenty make us more devout toward God, more obedient to our Governors, more diligent in our Callings, more juſt in our Dealings, and more charitable to the Poor; if when we get, we give more to works of Piety and Mercy, riſing temperate and fit for our Devotion from our well-furniſhed Tables, and giving him glory for all we enjoy; then, and only then Peace is a Bleſſing to us: And nothing but Religion and the fear of God can teach us thus to manage it to our true advantage: The Latin Poet obſerves, *the Romans were virtuous while War pinched and preſſed them, but were grown extreamly vicious by a long Peace,*

—jam ſævior Armis
Luxuria incubuit—

And 'twill be our caſe, if our abundance makes us forget the Lord our God who gave it; *Luxury will lie heavier on us than ever War did*; Debauchery kill more than the Campagns; and our Luſts lay far heavier Taxes than ever our Armies did: But with this woful difference, ſuch as died in the Field, went off honourable, and 'tis to be hoped they are happy, becauſe they ſacrificed their lives to the ſafety of their Religion and their Country; but the Martyrs of *Venus* and *Bacchus* make an infamous end, and

'tis to be feared go off with ſo much guilt as will ruin their Souls hereafter. The Charge of the War was pious and neceſſary; we purchaſed with it the ſafety of our Government, our Church and State, our Laws and Liberties; but theſe Expences are vain and needleſs, yea impious and deſtructive both to Soul and Body. Since then Peace it ſelf makes a wicked People more miſerable, and the ſanctified uſe of Plenty doth only make it a Bleſſing, we may conclude our principal Happineſs lies not in temporal Proſperity, but in *having the Lord, &c.*

Uſe. 'Tis time now to conclude by applying the whole to the Joy of this Day; and the firſt part of the Text ſhews us the ground of the ſecond, the manner and meaſure of our preſent rejoycing.

1. We are the People, which by Gods bleſſing on the Conduct of our Moſt Renowned King are, or ſhortly ſhall be in this happy caſe. Peace and temporal Felicity uſually go together, and rejoycing is inſeparable from happineſs: For joy is defined to be *a pleaſing apprehenſion, that we have, or are like to have all things that are convenient.* So that we muſt either be inſenſible, or even Nature will oblige us to be joyful; to be otherwiſe upon ſo juſt and ſolemn Occaſion would be impiety to God, ingratitude to our Gracious Soveraign, and inexcuſable malevolence to our Native Country; it would argue we were

were uncharitable to our Neighbours, and deſpiſed the benefits done to our ſelves. The miſeries of War are all gone, or going off; the bleſſings of Peace are all returning to us: Our beloved Deliverer is come back with Safety and Honour, and ſhall we not make this a Joyful Day? He hath made all *Europe* to rejoyce, and ſhall any be ſullen here, where our Government and Religion are both ſecured, where we have by manifeſt experience found *the Lord to be our God*? We behold the beſt of Princes acknowledged by his late obſtinate Foes to be our King, and our ſelves under him like to be the happieſt Nation in the Univerſe; doubtleſs therefore we ſhall all this day expreſs our ſatisfaction, by all the innocent ways we can deviſe. But I need not excite the willing, this Auditory hath given ſuch demonſtrations of their Affection for their Religion, their Loyalty to His Moſt Excellent Majeſty, and their Concern for the Welfare of this Kingdom, that I know there will be here a joy as great, as in any part of this Land.

Uſe 2. Wherefore I will ſpend the few moments remaining to exhort you to conſider, that Almighty God was the Author, and muſt be the Conſervator of this happy Peace, and therefore we muſt rejoyce like Chriſtians, *our joy muſt be in the Lord*; it is to be conducted by the Rules of his Word, and tend to the Glory of his Name. As Chriſtians we firſt meet at God's

God's Houſe; we begin our Joy with his Praiſe, and our care muſt be when we go from hence, that he whom we now publickly adore, we do not then openly diſhonour, and that our Afternoons Exceſs be not a ſcandal to the Devotions of a well ſpent Morning. *Tertullian* deſcribes, and complains of the Pagans for keeping *Cæſars* Birth-day — *So as to give the whole City the Face and ſcent of one great Tavern* (I tranſlate his own words) *filling it with all ſorts of lewdneſs and debauchery* — *Do ye* (ſaith he) *thus expreſs your publick Joy, by publick Scandals? Doth that become* Cæſar's *Solemn Day, which would be a ſhame to any Common Day? At this rate the pretence of Loyalty would be a licenſe for evil Manners, and your Religion excuſe your VVickedneſs.* By theſe meaſures ('tis true) Chriſtians would be the only bad Subjects, who alone rejoyce and wiſh well to *Cæſar* chaſtly and ſoberly (*x*). It had been happy if theſe Cuſtoms had never gone out of the Heathen World: But within one Age or two St. *Ambroſe* blames ſome Chriſtians *who accuſed their Brethren of Diſloyalty, unleſs they would be intemperate in too often pledging the Emperors health, as if* (ſaith he) *they thought Drinking a Sacrifice* (*y*). St. *Salvian* likewiſe charges many in this Age, *that they could not laugh without ſin, nor rejoyce without madneſs.* To whom he thus ſpeaks, — *let us be as merry as we pleaſe, ſo it be innocently,* — for he is void

(*x*) *Tert. Apol. p.* 28.

(*y*) *Ambr. de Elia. & jejun. c.* 1.

void of all ſenſe and piety too, who thinks his joy of no value, if it be not attended with affronts to his God (*z*). The Lord hath this Day pleaſed us, and ſhall we diſpleaſe him ſo ſoon after we have ſolemnly acknowledged his kindneſs? The *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *it becomes well the righteous* (and none elſe) *to give thanks* (*a*). And St. *Auguſtin* affirms, *We had better forbear bleſſing God, and do well, than pretend to praiſe him, and commit ſin* (*b*). Let us therefore ſtrive to exceed one another in Chriſtian joy, and expreſs it by ſincere Devotion and ſteddy Loyalty; if we have any thing to ſpare, let us remember, that which is ſuperfluous would help the Poor, but may hurt us: And as *Proclus* ſaith Ἑορτὴ ἔστιν πνήτων ἀγαθός, Let us do (after the Jews example in their *Purim*) *make it a day of Feaſting and Joy, of ſending Portions to one another, and Gifts to the Poor* (*c*). Such Charity will make the Joy as general as the Bleſſing; and by it we ſecure the praiſes of the Poor to the Publick, and engage them alſo to pray for us. Yea, we ſhall by this Holy Joy and Bounty declare, *we have the Lord for our God*, who made the Peace for us, and only can continue and ſanctifie it to us, and then it may be ſaid truly of us, *Happy are*, &c. Now to the Father, *&c. Amen.*

(*z*) *Sal. de Gub. l. 6. p.* 206.

(*a*) *Pſalm* XXXIII. 1.

(*b*) *Aug. Hom.* 2.

(*c*) *Eſth.* IX. 22.

F I N I S.

Books lately Printed for Robert Clavell, *at the Sign of the Peacock at the Weſt-end of St.* Paul's Church-yard.

A Sermon Preached at the opening of the Lecture at *Maldon* in *Eſſex*; lately eſtabliſhed by the Biſhop of *London*: In vindication of the Antiquity of the Doctrine of the Church of *England*. By *William Bramſton*, late fellow of *Queens Colledge* in *Cambridge*, and Rector of *Woodhamwater* in *Eſſex*. Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Auditory.

A Diſcourſe on the Offices for the 5th of *November*, 30th of *January*, 29th of *May*. By *Thomas Comber*, D. D. Dean of *Durham*.

The Church Hiſtory clear'd from the Roman Forgeries and Corruptions found in the Councils and *Baronius*. In four Parts. From the beginning of Chriſtianity, to the End of the Fifth General Council, 553. By *Thomas Comber*, D. D. Dean of *Durham*.

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An Hiſtorical Vindication of the Divine Right of Tithes, from Scripture, Reaſon, and the Opinion and Practice of *Jews*, *Gentiles* and *Chriſtians* in all Ages; deſigned to ſupply the Omiſſions, anſwer the Objections, and rectifie the Miſtakes of Mr. *Seldens* Hiſtory of Tithes. To which is added a Diſcourſe concerning Excommunication. By *Thomas Comber*, D. D. Dean of *Durham*.

F I N I S.